



Verona Environmental Commission

600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

Minutes of the Verona Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on April 20, 2016 - 7:30 P.M., conference room, Verona Community Center, 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona N.J.

Attendees: Gloria Machnowski (Chairperson), Anthony Saltalamacchia (Vice Chairman), Jessica Pearson, Martin Golan, Michael Foley (Planning Board Liaison) and Mayor Kevin Ryan (Town Council Liaison). Guests: Walter Steinmann and Sean DiBartolo.

1. Chairperson calls the meeting to order and reads the notice of Open Public Meetings law.
2. Minutes from the March 2016 meeting were approved by all present members.
3. Grove Park: Mr. Cavallo, accepted the Shade Tree Commission recommendation to plant two White Fringe Trees and five Witchhazel bushes in Grove Park. He has no objections to the town paying for the trees and plants or Jim Loudon being involved in the selection process. Gloria mentioned that Jim's plant placement design is more interesting and inviting. Mayor Ryan has no problem with Jim's design as long as the VEC doesn't plant trees in the driveway area, as requested by the Shade Tree Commission. Jim was not able to attend the meeting, but he offered Gloria to identify from which nursery this material is available and go tag the trees and plants, including herbaceous plants and ground cover. Gloria asked Jim for a quote to submit to the town manager for approval. The VEC can use any nurseries that accept a purchase order. Once the plants are selected, the planting could be done by Hillcrest Farms or volunteers.

April 30, 9 am to 11 am is the VEC Free Tree Seedling Giveaway and Cleanup at Grove Park. Gloria will pick up the seedlings at the Essex County Environmental Center and set up a 10 by 10 event tent with Tony in the early morning to keep the seedlings in the shade. Jessica is available to man the table. Walter and Sean will help. Virginia is not available to attend. Jim printed posters to advertise the giveaway. DPW will drop a table and cleaning supplies the day before. The VEC is planning to distribute 150 free tree seedlings with planting instructions, and display signs with the specifications of the species. The Verona Juniors confirmed attending the cleanup. The event flyer is in the Friday Folder and a press release was sent to the media. Gloria contacted school principals to send an email blast, and Montclair State University. Carl Cascone, VHS Science teacher, will invite students as well.

During the winter some sand and gravel in the Grove Park walkway washed away, and some slate pieces are loose. Jessica will take a look with Jack and contact Chuck to add sand if needed. There is a big broken slab of cement in the stream, by the end of the trail. The VEC could ask DPW to break it in smaller pieces to be moved to the front during the cleanup. The

VEC is planning to clean up the stream area as well. DPW will pick up collected materials the following Monday. Perhaps an electric jack hammer could be used to avoid driving over the walkway with equipment. Jessica suggested to leave the broken slab as it is. Sean recommended breaking it in ball size pieces to be relocated by the eroded channels. Tony likes the idea of re-purposing the material like brick lines. Gloria will contact the town manager and DPW to talk about the options before the event.

Gloria contacted Tom Jacobsen, the town Construction Official / Code Enforcement Officer, regarding three discharge pipes that the VEC observed with outfalls directed towards 42 Grove lot from the south (listed from east to west):

- 1) Blue ~8-inch-diameter SDR PVC pipe with a 4-foot cast iron extension at end. The pipe appears to run beneath wood shed located on the Block 78, Lot 44 property (2 Orchard Street). Minimal effluent was discharging out the pipe. It is possible that, given the size of the pipe, this is connect to a catch basin located at the bend in Orchard St.
- 2) Black ~4-inch-diameter HDPE pipe that runs between a row of short trees and a timber crib retaining wall. The pipe runs through the bottom of the retaining wall. It appears that the pipe line may be associated with the pool located on the Block 78, Lot 46 property (6 Orchard St.)
- 3) White ~4-inch-diameter PVC pipe that runs along the bottom of a retaining wall. It appears that the pipe line may be associated with the pool located on the Block 78, Lot 48 property (10 Orchard St.).

Mr. Jacobsen informed Gloria that he discussed the drainage pipes with Mr. Cavallo, Mr. Helb, and Mr. Molinaro and it is the Township's position that this is a non-issue. He explained that the site has ample drainage directed to natural water ways that removes the water from the site. Sean pointed out that the concern is that this is not just street drainage, but chlorine and other chemicals from the swimming pools. Mayor Ryan estimated that maybe once a year about one hundred gallons from the pools are dumped into Grove Park. (**See note below).

Gloria mentioned that there is an specific section in Verona code about swimming pools and drainage.

§ 129-6 Drainage: "Private swimming pools shall be equipped with facilities for drainage and/or backwash with not larger than a two-inch discharge hose or equivalent. Drainage or backwash should be directed to an accessible storm sewer or adequate dry well or surface runoff; where, however, only the sanitary sewer system is available, discharge of pool water into such sanitary sewer system shall be at the discretion and written permission of the Borough Engineer. Surface drainage shall not be permitted where such disposal shall adversely affect any other properties or cause a nuisance or hazard to the general public".

Sean pointed out that the discharge pipes from the pools look to be greater than 2 inches. While it appears discharge as surface runoff is permissible, the discharge shouldn't adversely affect any other property. Not sure whether or not this is this case in Grove Park. Mayor Ryan will look into this.

Regarding the guy wire anchored to a rotten tree in Grove Park, PSE&G went to the property and told the neighbor, Mr. Knighth, that Verizon needed to be contacted instead. Mr. Knight called Gloria and she informed Chuck. Tom mentioned that Chuck contacted Verizon and was waiting for a response. Mayor Ryan added that with the Verizon strike this could take some time.

The VEC approved to buy a sign to be installed at the end of the trail by the stream to replace the current "No Trespassing" sign. The new sign reads "Sensitive Habitat – Nature Preserve – Do not enter" - it is 18" by 18" Engineer Grade Aluminum, green background with beige text. Gloria submitted to Mr. Cavallo a requisition to purchase form, the estimate (\$18 plus \$8 shipping) from the township vendor, Sings and Safety Devices LLC, and the design. Mr. Cavallo approved it. The VEC will coordinate with DPW to have the sign installed before the cleanup.

Mr. Cavallo is putting together a policy for people that want to donate money and dedicate a park bench located on municipal property. Once the policy is in place the VEC will be able to advertise the program and potentially receive more funding for Grove Park. Nina Piccuiro is still interested on dedicating one of the benches in Grove Park to Brian Stevens. Mayor Ryan mentioned that he has no news about the policy yet.

4. Peckman Trail plans. Jessica is not able to attend the June 4 cleanup and suggested to have it in the fall. Gloria prefers to have it in June since the VEC poster contest is in the fall and NJ Clean Communities Council Clean Water Challenge could provide cleaning supplies for a June cleanup. Members approved to have the cleanup on June 4, before school is over. By then the Japanese knotweed will be ready to be pulled out and the water will be warm enough to do a river cleanup as well. Gloria will request town manager and BOE authorization for the cleanup date, send a press release, and ask Jim to print the flyers.

5. Rain barrels and Zika: VEC position. Verona Township is selling rain barrels from Rain Water Solutions Inc. through Sustainable Verona to be picked up at the green fair. Gloria explained that Virginia is concerned with the possibility of the barrels attracting mosquitoes and the potential for Zika virus. Gloria contacted Steve Neale, he attended presentations regarding this matter and said that hopefully this will not be a problem in our area.

Gloria mentioned that the barrels have a fine mesh filter to keep mosquitoes out, but she doesn't know how effective that is. So she contacted Lynn Ruck from Rain Water Solutions, and Lynn explained that they worked with a colleague at the EPA to design the Ivy rain barrel. They followed all EPA recommended standards and included all features a rain barrel should have.

Gloria pointed out to a new warning: "U.S. public health officials have issued a grim new warning – mosquitos of the type that transmits the deadly Zika virus are present in about 30 states across the nation – not 12 as originally thought." This includes New Jersey. Therefore Virginia put the following statement together, that Michael Foley read aloud during the meeting:

[HEAD] The Zika Virus And Verona

"On April 11, the federal Centers for Disease Control said that the mosquitos capable of transmitting the Zika virus are now present in 30 U.S. states, including New Jersey.

The Zika virus was discovered in 1947 and most frequently causes a fever, rash or joint pain. It has, however, recently been implicated in birth defects in Brazil and microcephaly, a smaller than normal head size in infants.

The Verona Environmental Commission would like to share the CDC's tips for preventing a Zika infection, which can be found here: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/> . The Environmental Working Group, a national non-profit organization, also has prevention tips, which you can read here: <http://www.ewg.org/research/ewgs-guide-bug-repellents-agezika/>

what-you-can-do-about-zika

Residents can limit the breeding of mosquitoes that could spread Zika or other diseases by eliminating standing water around their home. The CDC recommends emptying any item that could hold water (like planters, buckets or toys) once a week, then scrubbing the container and turning it over so that more water cannot collect it.

The CDC also recommends tightly covering water storage containers such as rain barrels, so that mosquitoes cannot lay eggs in them. The rain barrels that will be sold by Sustainable Verona at the May 21 Verona Green Fair have been designed to comply with standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency”.

VEC Chair asked members whether or not the commission wanted to take a position and explained that any statement the VEC writes will need to be approved by Verona Town Manager Matthew Cavallo before it is released to the public. Michael is working with FEMA in the response in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands and said he believes the latest numbers are 800 cases in 40 states. He supports this statement since it doesn't hurt to be safe. Tony pointed out that it is a good thing to remind residents about the many risks associated with mosquitoes and how to prevent problems. Sean added that it is good practice. Walter mentioned that mosquitoes can lay eggs even in a bottle lid filled with water, so you need to have the same precautions with litter. Martin agreed that a rain barrel is not more dangerous than a bird bath or garden toys collecting water where mosquitoes could breed.

Michael will send Gloria the most current information. Mayor Ryan thinks the statement is the right length, right track, common sense approach. All members agreed. Martin suggested to change the end of 4th paragraph to end with "collect" (without "it").

Tony asked if the "standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency" mentioned in the statement include prevention for Zika virus. Members said other dangerous items are bird baths, garbage / recycling bins (make holes in bottom), and litter such as a cups or water bottle and the piles of commingled items exposed to the rain, for example, in the recycling center.

Members suggested to add something to the statement something like this "The rain barrels that are being sold by Sustainable Verona to be picked up at the May 21 Green Fair have been designed to comply with standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency which includes a locking lid and mosquito-proof screen to keep bugs out."

Gloria will send all the suggestions to Virginia, once she shares the new version and members approve it, the VEC will present it to Mr. Cavallo.

5. Chairperson and members report.

Now the VEC is also responsible for mailing approved Purchase Orders to vendors. Gloria requested to be notified when there is mail to be picked up so there is no need to stop at Town Hall to check every week. The town will also provide prepaid envelopes.

Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk, contacted Gloria regarding the meeting notice and agenda that Gloria sends to two newspapers before each monthly public meeting. Jennifer Kiernan suggested that it is better to send all the meeting information once a year, otherwise the town will have to pay for adds each month. Sean stated that the monthly adds better follow the intention of the law, which is to inform the public. Gloria explained that the sunshine law allows both options, annual or monthly notices, in addition the VEC publishes the information

on-line in the VEC website and township's website and posts notices in the municipal bulletin board located at Town Hall. Mayor Ryan explained that it is more effective to publish this information on-line since people usually do not read the legal notices printed in the newspapers, but until the regulations change regarding modern technology, we'll need to keep sending notices to the newspapers. Mayor Ryan said that the VEC always do a great job sending approved minutes to the Municipal Clerk and posting on the website. All town commissions are required to send the public meeting notices and agendas.

Gloria explained that to be able to send to newspapers only one notice per year, the township should assign the VEC one venue for the whole year instead of switching between the Annex and the Conference Room. Mayor Ryan will request to have all VEC meetings in the conference room all year long. Members agreed to publish one notice per year with all the meeting dates in July. Gloria's and Jim's term expire on June 30.

Mayor Ryan mentioned that the VEC Alternate appointments will be on the agenda for May 2. The Steep Slope Ordinance was approved 4-0 by Council Members in April. There is a new employee at the Recycling Center and he is doing a great job. The Hilltop cleanup was great, about three truckloads of garbage were removed and metal was collected for recycling. A minor gasoline spill in Verona leaked into the Peckman River on April 14. The police took precautions and it will continue to be monitored by the Department of Environmental Protection.

6. The Green Fair in the Verona Civic Center, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, is on Saturday, May 21, 2016 from 11 am to 4pm. Gloria asked members to let her know their availability to help man the VEC table. Virginia is not available, she'll man her own table. The VEC will have an activity and distribute free recycling bins and barrels to Verona residents, as well as information about local programs. Mayor Ryan added that the Shade Tree Commission is under the impression that they will share the table with the VEC at the Green Fair. Gloria thinks that this is just a misunderstanding, she showed the VEC registration form requesting one table for the Commission. She will check with Steve Neale. Jessica mentioned that the VEC table was in a great location last year, right next to the expired drugs collection table.

7. Public Participation: Walter Steinmann and Sean DiBartolo participated during the meeting. Walter showed a plastic sign that his company designed to attach around street posts and display information on three panels. He offered the signs to be used by the VEC in Verona.

Adjournment 9:30 pm – Next Meeting May 18th, 2016 in the VCC conference room.

****NOTE:** Meeting minutes were approved at May 18 public meeting after Virginia Citrano noted that, if in fact those pools are discharging water into Grove Park, according to on-line pool calculators the estimated amount of water is a lot more than one hundred gallons. For example an above ground pool 12 ft. Rnd (48" deep) holds 3,200 US Gallons.